

YOUR PUBLIC HEALTH LINK



CENTRAL NEW YORK
MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH

A Quarterly Publication of the CNYMPH Program, a joint venture of SUNY Upstate Medical University & Syracuse University

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR: DONNA BACCHI, MD, MPH

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the Central New York Master of Public Health Program newsletter. The CNYMPH Program is CEPH-accredited and jointly sponsored by Upstate Medical University and Syracuse University. This newsletter will provide updates on what is happening in the program, including upcoming Grand Rounds and seminars, alumni news, and faculty and student research and service activities.

We look forward to sharing all our program news with you. Learn more about CNYMPH degree opportunities at www.upstate.edu/cnymph



CYNTHIA MORROW JOINS CNYMPH



Former Onondaga County Health Commissioner Cynthia Morrow MD, MPH, has joined the core faculty of the CNYMPH program as assistant professor. Dr. Morrow teaches Public Health Administration and Public Health Policy.

Dr. Morrow also is a senior Research Associate with the Center for Policy Research at Syracuse University and a Professor of Practice in SU's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs. The next issue of the newsletter will feature an interview with Dr. Morrow.

PUBLIC HEALTH TODAY: LEADERS OF TOMORROW

by Simone Seward, MPH

As I welcomed a new cohort of public health graduate students for this academic year, I continue to be amazed by the diversity of our student body not only related to race and ethnicity, but also their professional backgrounds, experiences, and passion for why they chose the field of public health.

Some chose the field of public health for personal reasons, others because it was something new and exciting to explore; still others wanted to complement their existing training or experience with population-based skills. The common thread among our students is their passion for wanting to make a difference in their communities and the thirst for knowledge on how to do it. I believe this is one of the important characteristics of becoming an effective public health practitioner and an effective leader.

What makes someone a leader? Some might consider a person who is an authority figure a leader; others may point to a community health worker, or someone who started their own non-profit organization or a free



Simone Seward, MPH

clinic to serve their community as a leader.

I am sure you can identify at least one person who you consider to be a leader, but what makes an effective leader? There is a plethora of literature on effective leadership as well as many leadership programs that provide trainings on how to be an effective leader. Speaking as someone who has been through

several leadership trainings and has had the good fortune of being mentored by exceptional leaders, I have come to regard leadership more as an intricate dance between one's personality traits, life experiences and value system.

In an article in *The Nation's Health*, Joyce Gaufin¹, APHA's current president, highlighted four elements critical to effective leadership: 1) forming and sustaining meaningful relationships; 2) living your passion by clarifying and nurturing the passion for what drives you; 3) sharing a vision that inspires and motivates people to move forward; and 4) engaging in lifelong learning that requires continuous assessment of or reframing current knowledge and practice.

The fifth element I would like to add, that I have experienced from those who have mentored me throughout my career, is modeling the way. They modeled the leadership attributes and behaviors that I was willing to follow and learn from, because

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LET'S CHANGE THE HEALTH OF OUR REGION IN ONE GENERATION...

As we collaborate and plan for the future, let us keep in mind the following top FIVE public health concerns in the 18-county area served by Upstate Medical University.



1. CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE

- Indicated by incidence rates, mortality rates and hospitalization rates of congestive heart failure, heart disease and stroke



2. CANCER

- Indicated by incidence rates and mortality rates of colorectal cancer, lung/bronchus cancer, prostate cancer, oral cancers, and ovarian cancer



3. CHILD HEALTH

- Indicated by mortality rates, prevalence of lead screening, incidence rate of high blood lead levels, prevalence of overweight and obesity



4. DIABETES AND CIRRHOSIS

- Indicated by incidence rates and mortality rates of physician diagnosed diabetes and cirrhosis



5. INJURY

- Indicated by mortality rates of suicide, motor vehicle accidents and non-motor vehicle accidents



*New York State Community Health Indicator Reports (CHIRS), <http://www.health.ny.gov/statistics/chac/indicators/index.htm>. Top public health concerns identified by health topics with health indicators in the least favorable quartile rankings across several of the counties served by UMU. (Researched by MPH student Jessica Solcz & Margaret Formica, PhD)

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



RUBAN DHALIWAL, MD

When Ruban Dhaliwal, MD, sees a patient at the Joslin Diabetes Center in Syracuse, she looks at several factors beyond the clinical presentation to deliver the best care possible. "For example, if I have a patient with low literacy, I have to be conscious of communicating my instructions clearly," Dr. Dhaliwal said. "I have to individualize it to the patient, and take into consideration his or her financial and social situation, literacy, language skills and cultural background."

This broad perspective has emerged through Dr. Dhaliwal's pursuit of a Master of Public Health degree in the CNYMPH program offered by Upstate and Syracuse universities.

Dr. Dhaliwal, who also is an assistant professor of medicine at Upstate, said the MPH degree will give her the skills to deliver the best care possible while understanding how decisions made for individual patients affect the entire community. "In the MPH program, we go into depth about the barriers patients face in self-care, and gain an understanding of healthcare at a community and population level" she said. "I started the program to enhance my research skills, but it opened my mind to a whole different perspective in treating my patients."

Dr. Dhaliwal strongly recommends the Master of Public Health degree for medical students, practicing physicians and other health professionals, saying it will help healthcare professionals:

- Maximize their potential to contribute to the care of their patients by addressing barriers, being more cognizant of each patient's situation and understanding the broader implications of care in the community.
- Acquire management skills and obtain the knowledge needed to understand public policy. In their role as administrators, these skills help them serve as advocates to provide guidance as policymakers and to implement health programs specific to the community.
- Have advanced skills in research. "For a physician scientist, these skills are essential," Dr. Dhaliwal said.

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NAME THE NEWSLETTER

Please help name our newsletter. The newsletter will evolve with each edition to provide not only information about the CNYMPH Programs, but also provide pertinent public health news to the region. Please submit your idea for a name by Nov. 28, 2014 to Cindy Paikin: paikinc@upstate.edu. Please put Newsletter Name in the subject line. If your idea is selected, you will win an APHA National Public Health Week tote and T-shirt!

Do you have a public health story to share?

Is your agency involved in an interesting project?

We would like to include community information or events in our newsletter. Please send your information to Simone Seward, MPH: sewards@upstate.edu for consideration.



WHAT IS PHIG?

By MPH student & PHIG President, Jessica Solcz

The Public Health Interest Group (affectionately referred to as PHIG) is excited to begin a new school year. We plan to become more involved with the Upstate and Syracuse University communities, take part in the Upstate Day of Caring, join walks/runs to support the fight against various diseases, and expand our knowledge of public health by hosting meet-and-greets with local public health professionals.

We have hosted a panel discussion during National Public Health Week, spoken at schools about public health paths, and engaged in lively discussions on local public health, all of which we intend to continue. We are eager to welcome new members from all programs and colleges. Let's all work together to develop fresh ideas on how to spread awareness and knowledge of public health! Want to get involved? Contact Jessie: Solczj@upstate.edu

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT *continued from previous page*

The MD/MPH program allows medical students to gain all of these skills while learning medicine. This gives them an opportunity to get involved in the community early in their career and also impacts their career decisions.

She said the flexibility of the class schedule has been very helpful, and students have different focuses, experiences and professional backgrounds. Sharing each other's perspectives makes the class environment very conducive to critical thinking

and learning about public health concerns, she said.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



JEANETTE ZOECKLER, MPH

FOCUSES ON HEALTH & SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

When we're using our cell phones, the last thing we probably think of is the worker who climbed hundreds of feet into the air to install an antenna on a distant tower. Not so with Jeanette. She is passionate about occupational health and safety. Fatalities on the job (by estimates) are between 5,000 and 6,000 every year... these include a small, but disproportionate number of cell tower climbers.

"In theory, all of them are preventable," Jeanette said of workplace deaths, acknowledging that some are just unfortunate accidents. "When you speak to the families of the workers who die, you get to thinking about how to prevent the fatalities."

Workplace safety covers far more than fatalities – it includes

hazards such as exposure to harmful air and substances, bullying and violence, employer violations (child labor, locked fire doors, wage theft), musculoskeletal injuries and stress. "Stress in the workplace can lead to chronic hypertension and obesity," Jeanette said. "It's costing money, but it's also causing real suffering."

Last summer Jeanette conducted research involving 275 low-wage workers in Syracuse, through her work at the Occupational Health Clinical Center, directed by Michael Lax, MD, professor of family medicine at Upstate. "Low-wage workers experience unstable and unpredictable work lives on many levels," Jeanette wrote. These workers (with an average pay rate of \$9.65 per hour) experienced wage theft and reported hazardous

conditions at work. Symptoms caused by workplace exposures are commonplace.

Jeanette reports the link between income inequality and poor health is a strong one, noting that low-paying jobs make up an increasing proportion of the U.S. workforce. Jeanette's project has received national attention. She will present her report, "Low-Wage Workers in Syracuse: Worker Health in the New Economy" at the APHA annual meeting in New Orleans in November.

"Many people don't realize the connection between work and their health," Jeanette said. "Awareness is key. Notice your environment. Everybody has something potentially hazardous

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SERVICE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

FOR STUDENTS

An important aspect of our program is the emphasis on applied learning, which is integrated throughout our curriculum. Many of our courses use applied projects that allow students to hone their skills with real world examples. In particular, our Field Placement and Culminating Experience courses are two avenues where students have the opportunity to work with and be mentored by public health professionals to address a public health problem. We also encourage our students to become involved in various volunteer opportunities, which can provide added exposure

to a network of public health professionals and can serve as a resume builder.

An annual event that has drawn many students and community agencies to work together is National Public Health Week, the first week in April. This event is sponsored by the Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, the CNYMPH program, and the Lerner Center for Public Health Promotion. It includes various daily activities with a public health focus. National Public Health Week will be held April 6-12, 2015. Please look for future announcements if you would like to get involved.

MPH students looking to volunteer or participate in public health related projects or opportunities please contact Siobhan Arey at AreyS@upstate.edu.

FOR AGENCIES

As a community agency, you too can assist with shaping our students into the public health professionals of tomorrow. If your agency has a project or opportunity that can benefit from the skills of an MPH student, please contact Simone Seward, MPH at SewardS@upstate.edu or Cindy Paikin at PaikinC@upstate.edu.

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those were in line with my own values and principles. I also experienced and witnessed the positive impact these leaders had on those they were trying to inspire and lead. I've often thought back to those leaders and said, "I want to be like you when I grow up."

Throughout your career, you will be faced with many complex public health challenges that will frustrate you, motivate you and

reward you. The knowledge and skills you are learning today will prepare you for the public health problems of tomorrow and will require you to be effective leaders. I've already observed several of our students exhibit a combination of these elements of leadership. I'm confident that no matter which direction your career takes, your passion will continue to drive the difference you will make in your community.

I echo the words of Joyce Gaufin: "The world that you will be leading does not exist – yet. We will depend on you to be the ones to ensure the public's health for generations to come." What type of leader will you be when you grow up?

Gaufin, J (2014, September). Today's public health students to ensure health for generations. *The Nation's Health*, p. 3.

GRADUATION 2014

As a speaker at the College of Medicine Commencement, MPH graduate Lauren Wetterhahn told a story about a community that was always rescuing people who had fallen into a river. After rescuing people for a period of time, the rescuers decided to go upstream to see why so many people were falling in. They discovered a dam needed to be repaired.

Lauren's story served as a metaphor for how the medical community treats many chronic diseases and other health problems that can be easily prevented. She encouraged



Lauren Wetterhahn

everyone to look for ways to prevent common diseases, rather than spend resources treating them.

CNYMPH graduates, their families, faculty and staff were treated to a reception at the home of Tom Dennison, PhD and Pam Horst, MD.

2014 Master of Public Health Graduates: Siobhan Arey, Rachel Carballo, Rachael Donovan, Sarah Irish, Janine Morris, Katherine Oja, Magdalena Postolovska, Jessica Soule, Lindsay Tarolli, Katherine Tindall, Xin Wang, Karen Wentworth, Lauren Wetterhahn.

Certificate of Advanced Study in Public Health Graduate: Kaushal Nanavati, MD

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT *continued from page 6*

in their workplace – teachers in older schools, for instance, might encounter molds or dust. It's good to be aware."

Jeanette has returned to the CNYMPH program as an occasional guest lecturer. Several current students have shown an interest in occupational health and safety and are completing their field placements at the Occupational Health Clinical Center with Dr. Lax.

Jeanette, who earned her MPH in 2013, is continuing her work in the field by pursuing a PhD in Syracuse University's Maxwell School. She is researching the social dimensions of work and health – and the prevention and amelioration of occupational disease through social change.

"It's all so fascinating to me," she said. "Occupational health encompasses medicine,

economics, sociology, politics and psychology."

Jeanette will talk about her work at the Nov. 20 Public Health & Preventive Medicine Grand Rounds.

For more information visit: <http://ohccupstate.org> or contact Jeanette at 315-432-8899 or via email at ZoeckleJ@upstate.edu.

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